

Welcome All Training - 2nd July 2007 Salt Museum, Northwich

This was an excellent training day with a very good trainer who kept the course on track with a good variety of discussion, input and exercises. I have noted down some of the themes and 'top tips' along with some of the exercises which you may choose to try in your own time.

Communication is the order of the day. It's what we do well.

It's all about ASK:

A attitude
S skills
K knowledge

SO, IF IN DOUBT, ASK.

The Disability Discrimination Act: is not law and, as such, provides a convenient 'let out' for those who do not see how it can benefit staff and visitors.

Websites: DDA and Disability Rights Commission

Disability: Our 'world' dis-ables people.

'Disability' involves language, physical, hearing, visual and learning.

'Access' can usually be improved very simply and effectively. It does not offend those who do not need the measures, but it makes a huge difference to those who do. E.g. We do not complain about automatic doors and symbol signs, but they have radically changed access issues for many.

We should NEVER make assumptions about disability.

We should ALWAYS have the courtesy to ask individuals about access issues.

We should challenge our:

Attitude
Fears
Assumptions

Exercise: Alive or Dead.

Think of as many famous people you can who have a disability.... Most of the names will be known because of their ability, not disability (e.g. Stevie Wonder, Steven Hawking, David Blunkett).

Social Disability - our environment disables.

Exercise: Make a list of

a) visible disabilities (e.g. white stick, wheelchair, large hearing aid) and

b) non-visible disabilities (e.g. diabetes, autism, tiny hearing aid)

Registered disabled: must have had disability for more than 1 year and have it for more than 1 year ahead.

Temporary disabilities - for less than 12 months (e.g. broken leg) can not be registered.

Why bother making things accessible?

10M people in UK registered disabled

Aging population

Legal and moral responsibility

Business sense

X-over of good practice benefits a wider customer group- (e.g. symbol signs are also good for foreign language visitors, ramps are also good for children's buggies)

Word of mouth is good advertising

Improves low peak visitors

Increase customer groups

Non-disabled people will recognise efforts made and pass on the message

Repeat business

What should we do:

The DDA states that 'reasonable' adjustments should be made.

To find out more about what these adjustments might be:

A) ask disabled customers about the access issues

B) ask regular customers for their thoughts - they will be honest, helpful and supportive

So, it's all about ASK:

A attitude

S skills

K knowledge

NEVER BE AFRAID TO ASK

Verbal Communication:

Check your language - if in doubt, ask someone what the correct term is.

(e.g. Not disabled toilets, but ACCESSIBLE TOILETS)

Exercise: Lip reading

Try 'mouthing' a simple set of instructions to a friend. Reverse roles.

Signing: there may be a short course in signing in the future, but in the meantime check out the British Sign Language Website.

Body Language:

Check your personal space

Wheelchair users - for short time, standing at a suitable distance is OK, but if for more than 3 mins, adjust your height to their eye level.

Exercise: sit staring at the ceiling for 3 mins and see how you feel.

Extending a hand is OK, but no closer than that. Don't lean on the wheelchair!!

Learning Difficulties / Disabilities:

Kiss and Kill (same principle applies to signage)

K	keep
I	it
S	short and
S	simple

K	keep
I	it
L	large and
L	legible

Pictograms or a pen and paper can be used sensitively (e.g. with speech impediments).

Visual:

Have confidence in helping - ASK

If, having asked, your help is required, suggest they put their hand on your shoulder or elbow

Talk to them about the environment, what's coming up e.g. steps, change in surface, doors.

Doors - blind person should be hinge-side. Change side if necessary.

Make sure person feels in control t all times.

Type-face: Ariel, title size - 18pts, text size 14 pts, black print on yellow or pastel, matt finish, 2 columns on A4.

Kate Harland, miller, Stretton Watermill